NUMB. XLVI.

The Prompter.

To be Continued TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS.

——*All is* Dullneſs, *when the* FANCY*'s bad.*

D. of *Buckingham.*

FRIDAY, APRIL 18. 1735.

IMAGINATION is the SUNSHINE of Thinking.——Truth, without it, looks languid, and melancholy—like a *Proſpect* in gloomy Weather: Where, tho' the Landſchape is the *ſame*, yet, the *Colours* are wanting, that ſhould enlighten, and adorn it.

I AM ſo pleas'd with a beautiful Inſtance of the *Livelineſs* wherewith this happy Quality can *gild* even the graveſt, and moſt mortifying Subjects, that I am not able to reſiſt the Temptation of *borrowing* it, for Entertainment of my Readers, out of the *Works* of Mr. *Jacob*, lately publiſh'd: Where I found it; among many other Pieces, full of the moſt ſtriking Impreſſions of *Genius*.

The REVERIE.

'THE good *Old Woman* had not yet got half 'over her *Story*, when POLLAVER, fir'd with 'her *Repetitions*, and finding no *Excuſe* to get from 'her, reſolv'd to reſign himſelf patiently to what, he 'ſaw, there was no Remedy for: So pulling his Mantle over his *Face*, he leant backward, in his *Seat*, 'with his Head *inclin'd* toward her, in a Poſture of 'Attention.

'THUS as he ſat, liſtening to her tedious *Tale*, 'he fell inſenſibly into a Kind of *Reverie*; in 'which He imagin'd, that he was hurried about the '*Æther* upon the *Wings* of rapid *Winds*, from one '*Planet* to another; diſcovering all the Variety of '*different Creations*: When, on a ſudden, reflecting upon the *Inhabitants* of *this Earth*, as tho' 'he had been of a *ſeparate Globe*, and not at all concern'd amongſt them, *God*, muſt certainly, thought 'he, have made theſe poor Creatures in his *Wrath*! '—How ſuperior are the *Reſt* of his *Works*, to 'theſe *Worms*!—Yet, Theſe very wretched, blind, '*Animals*, not *knowing* their own *Imperfections*, '(almoſt the only *Advantage* they enjoy) think '*Every thing elſe* has been *created* purely for *their* '*Sakes*!

'IN ſhort, It is difficult to conceive, for what 'Reaſon This great, and wiſe *Architect* has con'deſcended, to build ſuch *Frailty*, and *Imperfection*!—Tho' their *Lives* are ſo very *ſhort*, what a 'Deal of that *little* Space do they waſte in Purſuit 'of *Vanities*, abſolutely *Foreign* to the *End* of their '*Being*!—They have no certain *Firmneſs* of *Mind*, 'but alter their Diſpoſitions, as the *Seaſon*, the '*Climate*, or *Atmoſphere*, works upon them.—'Their *Reaſon*, the chief Thing they value themſelves upon, is generally the *Cauſe* of their *Miſery*, '—They carry their *Fears* even to *Impoſſibility*, 'and their *Hopes* beyond the *Grave*, *itſelf*!

'Their *Cuſtoms* are ſo very *odd*, and *various*, that 'they ſeem moſt ridiculous to one another; for 'there is nothing ſo *honour'd*, and *ſolemn* in one 'Part of the *Globe* they inhabit, which is not held '*ſhameful*, and *monſtrous* in ſome other Corner of 'it. Whatever they can't *comprehend*, they *deſpiſe*, 'or *admire* to a Degree of *Folly*: Whatever they 'have *not*, they impatiently *hunt after*, at the *Expence* of what they *really have*; for, what they '*actually poſſeſs* they generally *contemn*.

'It ſhou'd ſeem, that when *Nature* gives theſe '*Animals* any *Satisfaction*, or *Pleaſure*, ſhe does it '*ſparingly*, and, as it were, by *Force*, and *Obligation*; but that when ſhe diſtributes *Pain*, and '*Trouble* to them, ſhe ever appears in the moſt generous *Fit*, and readieſt *Diſpoſition* imaginable.

'The *Neceſſities* which they lie under, and the '*Diſeaſes* they are ſubject to, ought to give them 'very *humble* Opinions of themſelves; yet ſome of 'them have had the *Folly* to fancy themſelves *Gods*, 'and the *Inſolence* to ſuffer *Adoration*, as ſuch.—'It is ſtrange, that the *Shortneſs*, and *Uncertainty* 'of *Life* don't determine theſe *Creatures*, to make 'the beſt *Uſe* of their *Time*! ſo great is their *Love* 'of *Life*, that old *Age*, amidſt a thouſand *Diſeaſes*, 'and *Imperfections*, is look'd upon amongſt them as a 'moſt *deſirable*, and *honourable* Thing; and they deem 'it a peculiar *Bleſſing*, to *live*, after they are '*overloaded* with the *Injuries* of *Time*: Yet ſo great 'is their *Vanity*, that many of them, purely to gratify that *Paſſion*, have *voluntarily* depriv'd themſelves of this very *Being*, they are otherwiſe ſo '*anxious* about, and fond of *preſerving*.

'They *live longer* than moſt other *Creatures* upon the Face of their *Earth*, tho' they lead the moſt '*irregular*, and *unreaſonable* Life of any of them,

'and

and yet they are always full of *Complaints* of the *Brevity of their Days*, and ſcarce ever content, even when loaded with *Infirmities* never to be *remedy'd*, to reſign the moſt miſerable of all *Beings*; and indeed ſo little of their Time they may be ſaid *really* to *live*, that it is no great Wonder, that the moſt *aged* amongſt them ſhou'd look upon his *Duration* as a ſhort *Space*, great Part of which he can give no Account of; for in their *Infancy* they are more *ſenſeleſs*, and *helpleſs* than any other *Creature*, till by ſlow Degrees they gain an *imperfect Knowledge* of ſuch Things, as are judg'd *proper* for them to be acquainted with; for, neither the *Minds*, or *Bodies* of theſe *Animals* are permitted to enjoy their *Natural Liberty*: But, as ſoon as they find themſelves *ſtrong* enough to *ſhake* off this *Yoke*, they commonly break out into ſuch *Violences*, as are generally *repented* of in the next *Stage of Life*. They now, tho' very *obſtinate*, and *vain* before, grow ſtill *vainer*, and fancy themſelves *wiſe* in good earneſt, becauſe they begin to *diſcover* their own *Weakneſs*.

'Thus, in an arrogant *Affectation* of *Qualities* not *really* given to *Creatures* of their own *Rank*, they arrive inſenſibly at the End of a wretched *Being*, when we may behold this poor, worn out *Animal*, who was ſo head-ſtrong, and impetuous, now tam'd by *Age* in ſuch a Manner, as to want almoſt the ſame *Aſſiſtance* it did at its firſt coming into the *World*, and ſo *chang'd* from what it was, as to become even *frightful* to thoſe it *charm'd*, before, till, the *Springs* of Life quite *exhauſted*, the *Creature* ceaſes to be, and becomes a Part of that *Earth* it formerly ſo *proudly* ſtrutted on.

'THEY are ſubject to two Kinds of Death; one *periodical*, and *daily*, which is a Kind of *Renewal* of their *Being*; The other (of which the firſt is, as it were, the *Image*) *peremptory*, and *eternal*, and with them the *Accompliſhment* of all Things: The former they are delighted with, as an *Exemption* from *Pain*, and *Suſpenſion* of all *Care*, and *Labour*; yet, the latter, which is but a *Continuation* of *This*, is the moſt *terrible* Thing to them in the World.

'MANY of theſe *Animals*, toward the *Cloſe* of their *Time*, fall into a moſt *whimſical Diſeaſe* of the *Mind*, proceeding from a *ridiculous Imagination* that *Gold* is *intrinſically* the *moſt valuable* of Things, miſtaking it for the *Conveniencies* it may be exchanged for. Nothing can be more *ſurprizing* than the great *Induſtry* of ſuch, as are infected by this *odd Malady!* By how much the *nearer* they draw towards the Time they ſhall ſtand in Need of *Nothing*, by ſo much the more *diligent* and *earneſt* they become in this *Madneſs*, even to the breaking of their moſt *ſolemn* and ſacred *Tyes*; nay, many Times, to the Unnatural *Cruelty* of denying to themſelves the common *Neceſſaries* of Life. This is generally a very *ſordid Creature*, and if not *deſtroy'd* by ſome of its own *Species* for the Sake of its *Hoards*, lives commonly to a very advanced *Age*, in the midſt of a thouſand *Alarms*, *Fears*, and *Jealouſies*, ſurrounded with ſuch *immenſe Heaps*, as ſhou'd ſeem deſign'd for nothing leſs than the *Subſiſtance* of an *immortal* Being.

'THO' they are generally quite *ignorant*, or *miſinformed* of what paſſes every Day about them, they pretend, however, to *know* for *certain*, what has been done *many Ages paſt* in the *remoteſt* Parts of their *Globe*, and diſpute about it, with as much *Warmth*, as if it *really concern'd* them.

'THO' their *Affections* are *naturally* ſo *many*, and ſo *great*, yet they take a kind of *Pleaſure* peculiar to *themſelves*, in *diſtreſſing* each other; and have invented, for that *End*, *Plagues*, and *Torments*, too *horrid* to mention; and are ſo *pernicious* to their *Fellows*, that whenever it happens, that by the blind *Zeal* of ſome *Faction*, the *Ambition* of *Princes*, or the Licentiouſneſs of a *Conqueror*, they are *let looſe*, as it were, and *warranted* to *deſtroy*, their natural *Barbarity* is ſomething moſt *amazing*, and *ingenious*; and yet theſe *Animals never approach ſo near the State of ſuperior Beings, as when they feel the cordial Joy of doing Good to one another!* But, ſuch is the *Unhappy* Condition of theſe *Creatures*, that there are very few of them capable of ſo *ſublime* a *Satisfaction*.

'HERE, POLLAVER (his *Reverie* ſtill continuing) imagin'd, that ſome inviſible *Spirit* of one of the more *glorious Celeſtial Orbs*, cry'd out with a Voice *harmonious*, as the ſweeteſt *Muſick*.

'O *great* Director *of all* created *Things! cou'd we be permitted to* guide *under* Thee *the* Reins *of thy* Providence, *what* Pleaſure *ſhould we not have in adminiſtring unſeen our* Aid *to theſe poor, weak, and helpleſs* Wretches, *which thou haſt placed in the* Scale *of* Entity *ſo very much* below *us, and ſo very* near *the* vileſt *of thy* Creatures? *The moſt glorious* Miniſters, *who wait around thy refulgent* Throne, ſmile *from their* Height *at the* Folly *of theſe fantaſtic* Animals, *and ſometimes ſhed* heavenly *Tears at the* Cruelties *they inflict on one another!*

'Now this *melodious* Voice ſeem'd to ceaſe, and he thought, that the Mighty *Winds*, on whoſe *Wings* he rode, grew more, and more, impetuous; and that he heard the Noiſe of diſtant *Thunder*, and the Fall of many *Waters*; and that he was *tranſported* with incredible *Swiftneſs* to another Part of the *Univerſe*, far diſtant from the former, in the midſt of innumerable *Worlds*, leſs Glorious than the firſt, and ſurrounded with very Gloomy *Atmoſpheres*. Here he conceived he was forced to change often his *Situation*, from *Globe* to *Globe*; but always for the *Worſe*; till he imagined, that, at laſt, he ſhed Abundance of *Tears*, to find, that the Almighty *Creator* of all Things had formed ſo many *Worlds* of *Beings*, who ſeem'd to him ſuch *miſerable Animals*, when, on a ſudden, he fancy'd, he heard a *loud*, and *terrible* Voice, which ſpoke to him in this Manner:

'O *weak, and audacious* Mortal! *preſume no longer to cenſure the Works of that* Divinity, *who has created the* Univerſe *in that wiſe* Order, *which thou art not* deſign'd *to* comprehend.

'HERE, it ſeem'd, that a Moment of profound *Silence* ſucceeded, when POLLAVER, recovering from his *Reverie*, ſtarted up from his Seat, and cry'd out thus, *Heavens! how ſome People's Fancies rove!* FANCIES! quoth the *Old Woman*, who had juſt finiſh'd her *Story*, *Fancies!* ſays ſhe, may I never have the *Pleaſure* of *ſpeaking* another Word, if I have told you a *Syllable*, but what's as *true*, as you are there alive!

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